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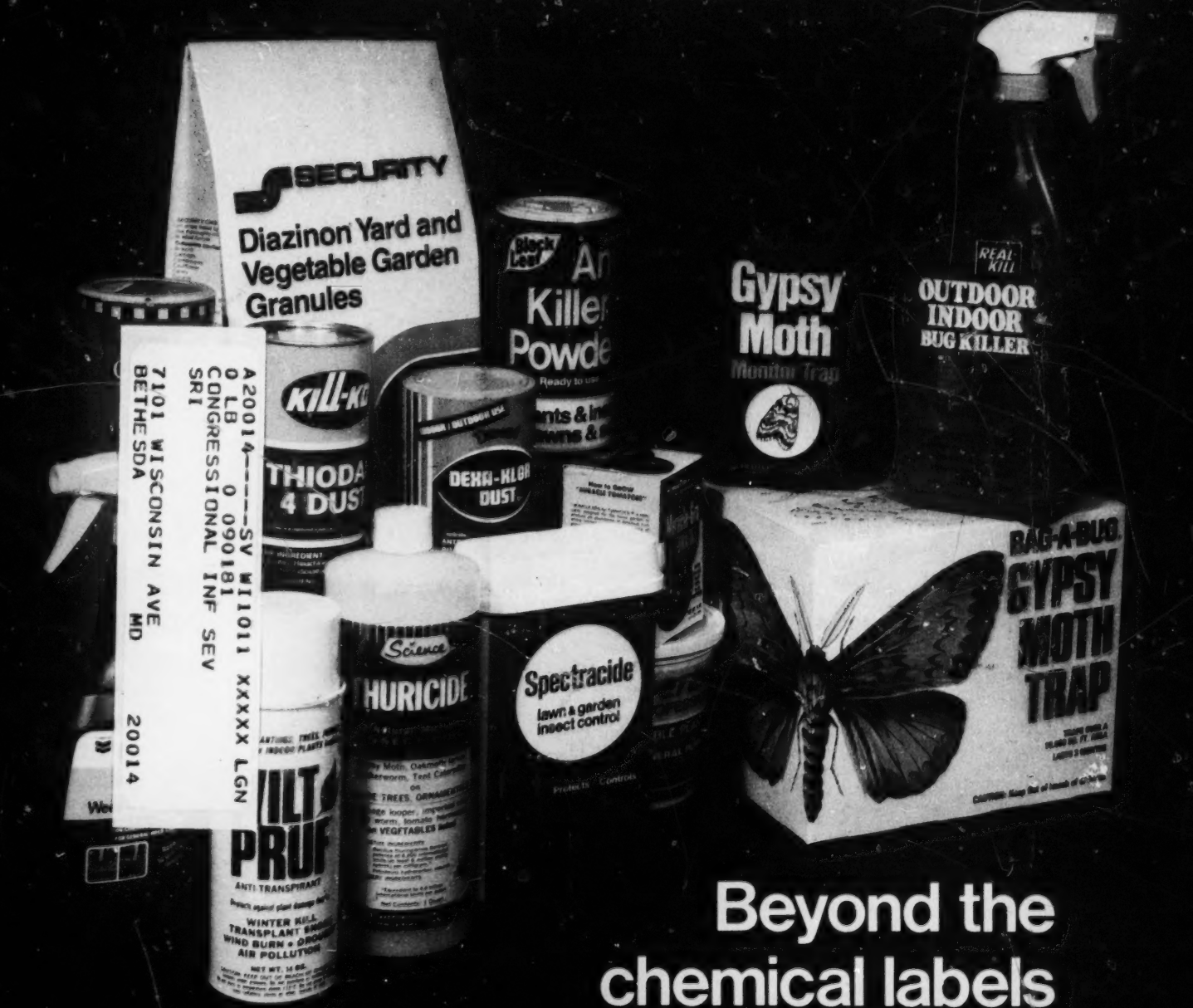
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER, 1981

Lawn&Garden Marketing



Beyond the chemical labels

More questions than answers?

Editorial, Advertising and Circulation correspondence should be addressed to: 9221 Quivira Road, P.O. Box 12901, Overland Park, KS 66212-0930 (a suburb of Kansas City, Missouri).

EDITORIAL
Wendell Burns, Editor
Marjorie Riggin, Associate Editor
Debbie Baker, Editorial Assistant
Pat Blanton, Source Book Editor
Ted Stamen, Consulting Editor
Dudley Rose, Senior Art Director
Anita Blattner, Art Director

CIRCULATION
John C. Arnst, Director
Evelyn Rogers, Manager
Dee Manies, Reader Correspondent

Member of American Business Press ABP

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ADMINISTRATION
R. J. Hancock, President
John Wickersham, Publisher

ADVERTISING
Jane Brooksher, Marketing Coordinator
Lou McNeill, Production Manager
Production Sales—See regional marketing office listing on Classified Ad page.

Lawn & Garden Marketing (USPS 306-340) (formerly Lawn/Garden/Outdoor Living with which is combined Modern Garden Center) is published by Intertec Publishing Corp., 9221 Quivira Road, Overland Park, KS 66212.

Subscription qualification or price: Publication is mailed free in the U.S. and Canada only to qualified persons in retail or wholesale businesses responsible for buying and merchandising product lines and services related to landscaping, gardening, turf, patio, indoor plants and leisure living. Non-qualified subscriptions are $24 a year in the U.S. and $30 in Canada and other countries.

Single copy price $2 plus postage and handling. Back issue price, $3 plus postage and handling. Adjustments necessitated by paid subscription termination at single copy rate. Allow 6-8 weeks for change of address or for new subscription processing.

Subscriptions and subscription correspondence should be sent to P.O. Box 12901, Overland Park, KS 66212-0930.

Second class postage paid at Kansas City, Mo.

***Publishing dates are as follows:** Monthly January through April; one issue each in June, August, October and November; two issues in September.

INTERTEC PUBLISHING CORP.

NOV./DEC. 1981 VOL. 20 No. 10 PUBLISHED 10 TIMES ANNUALLY

Lawn&Garden Marketing

The merchandising magazine for lawn, garden and leisure living products.

Beyond the chemical label. Instruction from knowledgeable personnel is needed by novice gardeners, according to Ted Stamen, veteran horticulture/retailing educator.

15 **Sales surge to meet gypsy moth invasion.** Retailers report increased volume in control products as experts research various control methods. Data from Cornell University.

16 **Hard news and good vibes. LGM** reports on this fall's major shows that attracted heavy regional, national and international attendance to lawn and garden product exhibitions.

29 **Products and promotions for a 12-month season. LGM** reconstructs a monthly merchandising calendar to assist retailers in creating customer-links between peak selling seasons.

57 **Index of 1981 articles.** Feature articles published throughout the past year in **LGM** are listed chronologically.

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Coming in the January issue: Merchandising gardening products successfully to experienced, as well as those increasing numbers of first-time, home vegetable gardeners. Technical data and sales trends for tillers and garden tractors. An executive forum of widespread interest. OPEI will release their annual shipment data.

Postmaster: Return form 3579 to Lawn & Garden Marketing, P.O. Box 12901, Overland Park, KS 66212-0930.
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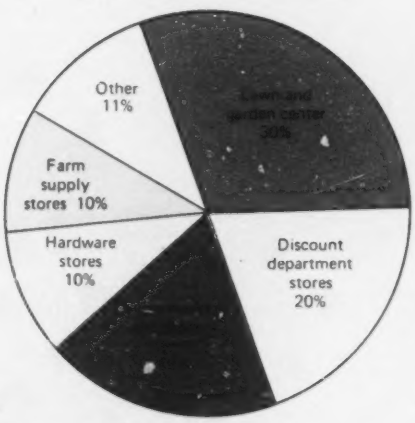
Beyond the chemical labels

More questions than answers?

A veteran horticulture/retailing educator, Ted Stamen, recently challenged a group of chemical formulators and distributors to take a close look at the "missing link" in educating the home gardener in the use of their products. We asked him to reconstruct the major concepts of his talk for this report. Stamen, as an urban horticulture advisor with the University of California Cooperative Extension Service at Riverside, has organized programs for the training of hundreds of retail horticultural sales personnel.

Fertilizer and pesticide distribution by type of retail outlet 1980 estimates

Percent of marketers' dollars



Source: C. H. Kline and Co.

■Let's make a visit to one of our local garden centers or home centers. After entering the front door, we will proceed to the lawn and garden chemical department. As we look around, we see item after item formulated to help customers solve lawn and garden problems. The shelves are well stocked with containers of insecticides to control insects, herbicides to control and eradicate weeds, fungicides for disease control and numerous other items to assist an ever-growing population of home gardeners.

In this lawn and garden chemical department, there is a missing link – the key to success for the consumer and for all those involved in the manufacturing and marketing of these excellent chemicals. What is it? Knowledgeable sales personnel. Salespeople with the expertise to diagnose consumer lawn and garden problems and to recommend the right treatment, ensuring positive and safe results.

The personal touch sought

It is my feeling that the manufacturers can have great point-of-purchase educational information, super descriptive labels and wonderful handout literature. But for many gardeners, especially first timers, that's not enough. They want and need the personal assistance of a knowledgeable sales person. This seems to be tied to the need for personal reassurance, someone to listen to the problem and, most of all, someone to instill confidence in that puzzled consumer.

continued...

At Ole's Home Center in California, a sales clerk examines the roots of a diseased plant, right, and at left, he interprets the instructions on the label.

Even though there are many excellent retailers selling chemicals and doing a fine job, it is my contention that more than 50 percent of the retailers selling lawn and garden chemicals are doing so without one knowledgeable salesperson on their respective staffs.

All-out effort needed

I strongly feel an all-out effort needs to be undertaken to train retail sales personnel. Straightforward information given to consumers meets ethical standards, as well as being good business practice. From a financial aspect, straightforward answers will make money for retailers. Following is an actual example of this point, which I recently witnessed: a customer came into an excellent garden center and explained she wanted to control broadleaf weeds in her lawn. A well-trained sales person sold her the appropriate herbicide. The sale would have ended with a bottom line of $5. However, the sales person assisted the consumer by selling her a pre-emergent weed control for her flower beds, a sprayer for this purpose, a bottle of spreader-sticker and a pair of gloves. This add-on selling brought the total sale to over $100 and created a permanent customer who could go home and do the job with the proper equipment. Add-on selling opportunities develop all the time, therefore I am at a loss when I hear people in our wonderful industry say—I can't afford to train my sales personnel! Maybe the question should be: Can you afford *not* to train your personnel?

Distributor responsibility?

Recently I had the opportunity to speak to a group of distributors and formulators from all over the United States. The thoughts they expressed represented the thinking of many people in the lawn and garden industry. I suggested that distributors have a responsibility to train lawn and garden sales personnel. In fact, this is done quite commonly by progressive distributors in California. Many of those in the audience said they don't have time to perform this role. Well, who has the responsibility to train retail sales personnel? I don't have the answer to this perplexing question. However, I think we should take the time now to study it.

How errors boomerang

First and foremost, everyone in the industry loses when an untrained person gives poor information or a consumer misuses a chemical. It doesn't matter who is at fault. One turned-off customer can negatively influence 35 to 50 other potential or active gardeners in a negative way. Bad news travels fast. However, it is difficult to place your finger on how many people get discouraged and drop out of gardening each year. In most cases, these are the people who had unfavorable results for one reason or another. One thing you can be sure of: these ex-gardeners are not enthusiastic supporters of lawn and gardening activities. This is especially true for those who misuse backyard chemicals by killing or damaging their favorite trees, shrubs or lawns. It seems they can't talk about this depressing subject enough. Many of these problems could be prevented if employees who deal with lawn and garden consumers were trained.

Two strategies for training

Those who do work at training their sales personnel usually use one of the following strategies: Top retailers conduct their own training; in most cases this is done on a weekly basis. The managers may do the training themselves, or use their own employees or use supplier sales representatives. The training will deal with marketing, merchandis-

continued...

ing, sales and plant culture aspects dealing with insects, diseases, planting, fertilizing, etc. Other retailers will conduct sporadic training sessions mainly by using supplier sales representatives. Bedding plant sales representatives know more about bedding plants than others; the fertilizer salesman knows his product best, and so on. Also, one doesn't pay a direct fee for this service.

One solution: moonlighters

I would like to suggest another way to obtain excellent teachers to train retail sales personnel. What I want to see is a combination of using supplier representatives, key retail employees who have a specific assignment and third party experts. I feel that some of the most talented people in the business are moonlighters, semi-retired or retired people. All of these folks would love to be involved in doing training if you give them time to prepare, give them a specific assignment and pay them a fair wage. Who am I speaking about when I say third party? I am thinking about the retired agriculture inspectors and entomologists who spent the better part of their lives dealing with ornamental plants. Others are retired or moonlighting junior college or college entomologists or horticulturists, suppliers' fieldmen or sales representatives. The selected person should have personality, technical knowledge, and teaching ability to be a first class trainer.

Subject areas listed

More training needs to be directed toward lawn care, soils, insects and disease control, and other related subjects. These are the areas in which consumers are looking for more help. Other sales aspects deal with sales and marketing. Training now being conducted is product-oriented rather than problem-oriented . This is only natural, as the fertilizer salesman wants to talk about *his* product. It would be advisable to direct the teaching or training toward the subject matter and at the same time bring in sales aspects. For instance, when talking on planting a new lawn from seed or sod, the trainer should deal with potential sales opportunities for tools, soil amendments, fertilizer and other necessary items. Many times the technically trained people lack a flair for this aspect. But there are many professionals who are capable of being good teachers or trainers and can do the job. The dollars spent for this service can be returned many times in increased sales.

Managing insect invasions

Let's change topics. Are you prepared to take advantage of a horticulture epidemic? Nature can be a financial ally. Opportunities for increased sales often present themselves and are rarely taken advantage of. These epidemic opportunities for increased sales may be on a local, regional or national level. However, they will fly by if one doesn't recognize them and have the management capacity to do something about them. Recently a small town I know of had an outbreak of fleas. The local garden center did a great service to the community by discussing the problems on a popular radio program. It also discussed the problem and its solution in advertising scheduled for a weekend.

Sales increased $15,000

The owner also printed handout literature on this subject and made it available in his store. All his educational information dealt with the problem and its control. He discussed how to spray for fleas, what materials to use and other details. This promotion resulted in an increase of gross chemicals sales of over $15,000. Ask yourself, are you capable of recognizing and actively putting an immediate sales campaign together to help the public and yourself if this type of opportunity comes your way?

These epidemic sales opportunities are happening all the time. We can see them with the gypsy moth problem, medfly, fruit fly, and crabgrass. All these and others represent real opportunities—especially for retailers with trained sales personnel. □

An article about the gypsy moth is on page 15.

See these people for Vapam:

ASGROW FLORIDA CO.
P.O. Box Drawer D
Plant City, FL 33566

BARZEN OF MINNEAPOLIS INC.
455 Harrison Street N.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55440

BLACK LEAF PRODUCTS CO.
667 North State Street
P.O. Box 418
Elgin, IL 60120

BONIDE CHEMICAL CO. INC.
11 Wurz Avenue
Yorkville, NY 13495

CALIFORNIA LIQUID FERTILIZER CO.
Bin 50 Arroyo Annex
755 S. Raymond Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91105

SUNNILAND CORP.
P.O. Box 1697
Sanford, FL 32771

CHIPMAN CHEMICALS LTD.
400 Jones Rd., PO Box 9100
Stoney Creek, Ontario
Canada L8G-3Z1

DEXOL INDUSTRIES
1450 West 228th Street
Torrance, CA 90501

ESTECH GENERAL CHEMICALS CORP.
30 North LaSalle Street
Chicago, IL 60602

FAESY & BESTHOFF INC.
143 River Road
Edgewater, NJ 07020

GREEN LIGHT CO.
P.O. Box 17893
San Antonio, TX 78217

KELLOGG SUPPLY INC.
23924 S. Figueroa
Carson, CA 90745

CHAS. H. LILLY CO.
7737 N.E. Killingsworth
Portland, OR 97218

SCIENCE PRODUCTS
5801 North Tripp Avenue
Chicago, IL 60646

SOUTHERN AGRICULTURAL INSECTICIDES INC.
P.O. Box 218
Palmetto, FL 33561

WOOLFOLK CHEMICAL WORKS INC.
Box 938
Fort Valley, GA 31030

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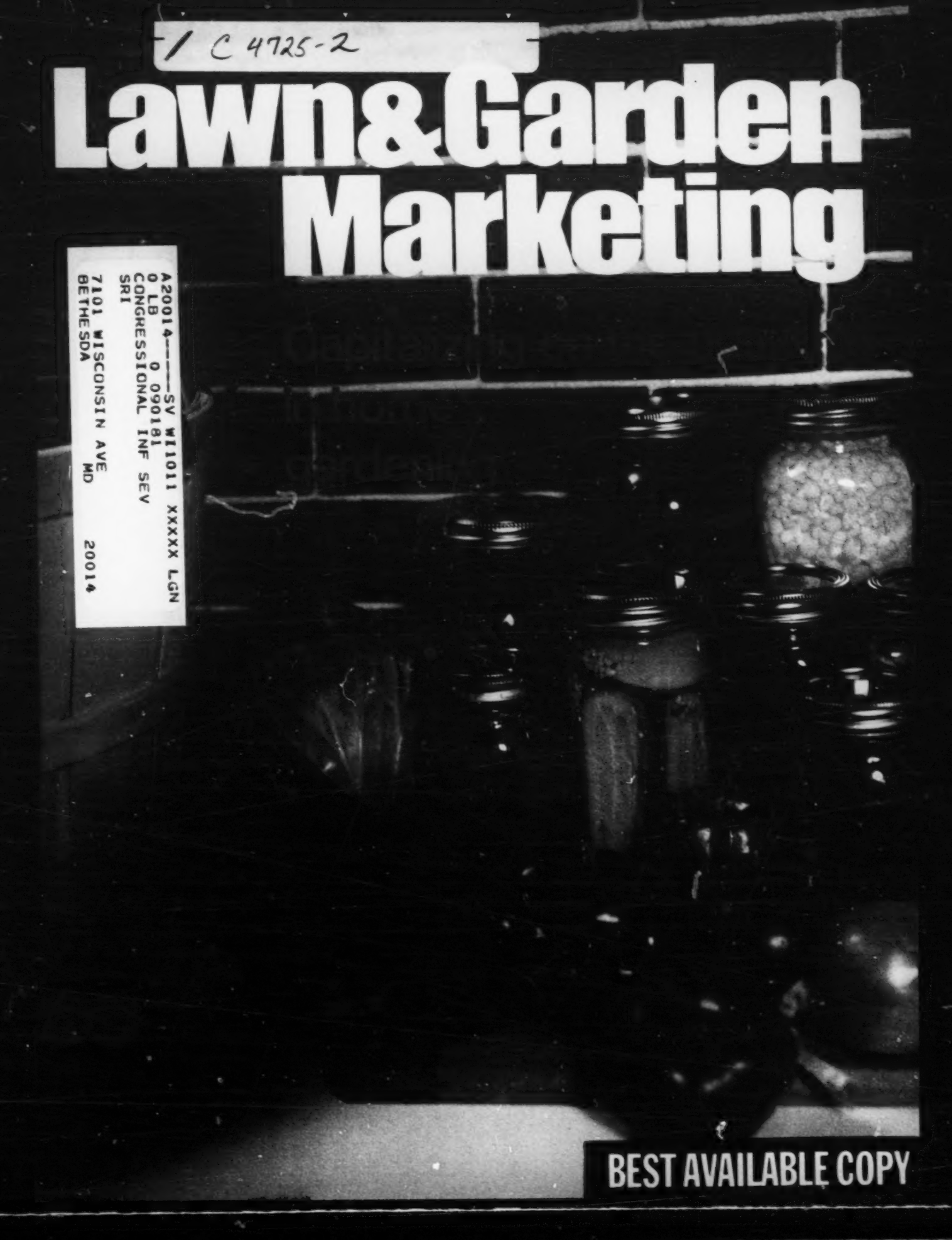

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INTERTEC PUBLISHING CORP.

JANUARY 1982 VOL. 21 No. 1 PUBLISHED 10 TIMES ANNUALLY

Lawn&Garden Marketing

The merchandising magazine for lawn, garden and leisure living products.

8 **Power for big gardens. LGM** reports trends in power equipment and attachments as reflected in suppliers' and retailers' comments.

20 **Creating a vegetable garden boom.** One garden center's strategies fan the demand by making it easier and more interesting to garden.

29 **New acquisitions, expansions, consolidations show industry trends.** Regrouping, reinforced by aggressive advertising and marketing, has paid off.

34 **Why's and how's of home gardening trends. LGM** presents several of the more compelling forces behind the new interest in growing vegetables.

38 **Are chains outgrowing cookie-cutter expansion strategies?** Charles G. Gifford, president of Retail Marketing Services Inc., analyzes today's techniques in developing multi-store operations.

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Coming in the February issue: SELLING TURF PRODUCTS – A retailer's comprehensive guide on technical and marketing aspects of products used for improving home lawns: seed, chemicals, fertilizer, soil conditioners and application equipment (sprayers and spreaders).

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Power Equipment Highlights

Vol. 3 No. 1 January 1982

Excerpt from Chairman Steort's address to OPEI

In her address to the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute, Nancy Steorts, chairman of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, complimented members for their efforts in working with CPSC staff in developing voluntary safety standards. Pointing out that CPSC expertise and data are available to the OPEI, Chairman Steorts concluded by stressing an anticipation of "mutually beneficial effective programs which will in the final analysis benefit the American consumer."

NESDA is off and running

During three days of meetings in November in Seven Springs, Penn., the National Equipment-Servicing Dealers' Assn. resolved an ambitious agenda "in complete harmony." Twelve of the 13 NESDA board members were present or represented, each contributing from a background of experience in state and regional dealers' associations: Norman Beck, chairman, N.Y.; Thomas Burger, Mich.; Larry Cradler, Ohio; Wayne Todt, alternate, Ohio; Barbara Curtis, Calif.; H. N. Mullins, Ala.; Clarence Myers, Fla.; Vernon Uhlinger, MEDA alternate for Lillian Nadeau, Mass.; Jerome Novekosky, treasurer, Penn.; David Parke, Calif.; Leonard Shetler, Ohio; Kyrle Wm. Preis, replacing Don Wenger, Md.; Wilb Westermann, Ill. Absent: Elaine Foltynwicz, no alternate, Ill.

Join directly or through association

NESDA members soon will receive packets of information for their use and to use in recruitment of other servicing dealers into a nationwide network. Being compiled are copies of the NESDA constitution, the statement of NESDA positions on issues, brochures outlining NFPEDA insurance benefits and services for NESDA members, a roster of regional affiliates and other pertinent information. NESDA dues should be $20 per year, payable directly or through regional associations. Information packets will be mailed to members when their applications and dues are received.

First step

A brochure spelling out NESDA's aims in suggesting reasonable solutions for problems is immediately available. For this brochure and for information about membership, send name, address and $3.50 to NESDA, East Main Street, P.O. Box 121, Jefferson Valley, NY 10535, (914) 245-5678. (This money will be used to defray costs of printing and postage; NESDA does not yet have a formal income source).

As voted, the next meeting of the board of directors will be handled via conference call.

OPEDA sponsors seminar for dealers

One of the forces spurring OPEDA to sponsor a retailing-dealer management training seminar has been the rise in numbers of bankruptcies. The *Wall Street Journal* recently wrote of a 32 percent average increase in bankruptcies filed. Dun and Bradstreet reported a 42 percent rise, just in commercial and industrial areas. A specialist from Bank of America predicts that retailing failures will increase significantly.

To help dealers forestall financial failure by sharpening their management skills, the consulting firm, Ar-Jay Enterprises, has developed a one-day, concentrated no-frills seminar. Ralph V. Jenkins, Ar-Jay president, brings over thirty five years' experience in the wholesale-retail sales marketing field to this endeavor.

Available through OPEDA distributors

The retailing-dealer management training seminar is available to power equipment dealers only through their OPEDA distributors. Distributors will benefit if their dealerships stay alive and well because their trained dealers can cope with marketing challenges of the '80s. In view of the quality of the training to be offered, this seminar is highly recommended by the OPEDA organization.

Dealer Development Seminar Highlights

- Introduction to small business management
- Basic practical principles of retail management
- Steps necessary for successful small business management
- Evaluation and analysis of your current business

Briggs & Stratton has new electric motor

Briggs & Stratton has developed and will manufacture an electric motor suitable for a variety of applications, including lawnmowers. It can be braked readily to meet the CPSC 3-second blade-stopping requirement.

Uses a two-conductor cord

The new motor is a 120-volt, double insulated, direct drive, 4-pole permanent magnet type, rated at 1,000 watts. Designed to meet the double insulation requirements of governing safety laboratories in the United States and Canada, it requires only a two-conductor cord. The motor may be connected to normal, 60-cycle, 120-volt household current through a 100-foot, 16-AWH extension cord.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR
OPEDA Feb. 17, 18, 19

Second annual convention, Miami, Florida.

OPEI reports key lawn and garden shipments

Product	Unit shipments 1981	1980	Change %	F.O.B. shipment value 1981	1980	Change %
Walk-behind power mowers	4,600,000	5,700,000	-19.3%	$ 606 MM	$ 701 MM	-13.6%
Lawn tractors/riding mowers	620,000	808,000	-23.3%	453 MM	530 MM	-14.5%
Riding garden tractors	151,000	220,000	-31.4%	266 MM	351 MM	-24.2%
Rotary tillers	501,000	667,000	-24.9%	138 MM	159 MM	-13.2%
	5,872,000	**7,395,000**	**-20.6%**	**$1,483 MM**	**$1,741 MM**	**-13.9%**

Source: Outdoor Power Equipment Institute

1981 model year, estimated